AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of ~~providing an answer to~~ <u>answering</u> a question

based on information stored on a computer-readable medium comprising ~~the steps of~~:

        parsing ~~a~~ <u>the</u> question <u>into a series of syntactic categories</u>;

        generating an analyzed question <u>comprising the syntactic categories of the</u>

<u>parsed question</u> ~~including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a~~

~~portion of the parsed question~~;

        identifying ~~at least~~ one <u>or more</u> predetermined question pattern<u>s</u> within the

analyzed question ~~including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the~~

~~first identification of a syntactic category~~;

        transforming the one or more identified question patterns into one or more

partially unspecified statements, said transforming including matching each of the

identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to

said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially

unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said

predetermined transformations describe syntactic <u>category</u> variations of one or more

terms included in the question;

        generating partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially

unspecified statements; and

        <u>determining</u> ~~obtaining~~ <u>one or more</u> answers by matching the partially

unspecified queries to stored information.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the transforming step further comprises:

transforming matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements using syntactic frames.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

collecting <u>the one or more</u> answers from matching the partially unspecified queries across a plurality of documents in the stored information.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

ranking ~~each obtained~~ <u>the one or more</u> answer<u>s</u> according to ~~its~~ <u>their</u> frequency of matching.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the stored information comprises a set of documents and an index identifying which documents within the set of documents contain terms or groups of terms answering the partially unspecified queries.

6.-31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein generating said partially unspecified queries further includes:

replacing a generic syntactic or morphological category with one or more corresponding elements from the question.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a first of said partially unspecified statements is transformed into more than one partially unspecified queries in accordance with a mapping of a question word to more than one corresponding partially unspecified term.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of providing an answer to answering a question comprising the steps of:

parsing a the question into a series of syntactic categories;

generating an analyzed question comprising the syntactic categories of the parsed question including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

identifying ~~at least~~ one <u>or more</u> predetermined question pattern<u>s</u> within the

analyzed question ~~including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the~~

~~first identification of a syntactic category~~;

transforming the one or more identified question patterns into one or more

partially unspecified statements, said transforming including matching each of the

identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to

said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially

unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said

predetermined transformations represent affirmative statement patterns corresponding

to said one or more matched question patterns;

generating partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially

unspecified statements; and

<u>determining</u> ~~obtaining~~ <u>one or more</u> answers by matching the partially

unspecified queries to stored information.

36.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein said partially

unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

37.   (Currently Amended) A <u>computer readable medium storing a </u>computer

program product for <u>providing an answer to </u>~~answering~~ a question comprising ~~code~~

~~that~~:

computer program code for parsing a the question into a series of syntactic categories;

computer program code for generating ~~generates~~ an analyzed question comprising the syntactic categories of the parsed question ~~including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question~~;

computer program code for identifying ~~at least~~ one or more predetermined question patterns within the analyzed question ~~including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the first identification of a syntactic category~~;

computer program code for transforming ~~transforms~~ the one or more identified question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, ~~said code that transforms~~ including computer program code that matches each of the identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined transformations describe syntactic variations of one or more terms included in the question;

computer program code for generating ~~generates~~ partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and

computer program code for determining ~~obtains~~ answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored information.

38.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, wherein the code that transforms computer program code for transforming the one or more matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, further comprises:

computer program code for transforming code that transforms matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements using syntactic frames.

39.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, further comprising code that:

computer program code for collecting collects answers from matching the partially unspecified queries across a plurality of documents in the stored information.

40.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, further comprising code that:

computer program code for ranking ranks each obtained the one or more answers according to its their frequency of matching.

41.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, wherein the stored information comprises a set of documents and an index identifying which documents within the set of documents contain terms or groups of terms answering the partially unspecified queries.

42.   (Currently Amended) The <u>computer readable medium</u> ~~computer program product~~ of Claim 37, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

43.   (Currently Amended) The <u>computer readable medium</u> ~~computer program product~~ of Claim 37, wherein said <u>computer program code for generating</u> ~~code that generates~~ said partially unspecified queries further <u>comprises</u> ~~includes code that~~:

computer program code for replacing ~~replaces~~ a generic syntactic or morphological category with one or more corresponding elements from the question.

44.   (Currently Amended) The <u>computer readable medium</u> ~~computer program product~~ of Claim 37, <u>further comprising computer program code for transforming</u> ~~wherein~~ a first of said partially unspecified statements ~~is transformed~~ into more than one partially unspecified queries in accordance with a mapping of a question word to more than one corresponding partially unspecified term.

45.   (Currently Amended) A <u>computer readable medium</u> ~~computer program product~~ for <u>providing an answer to</u> ~~answering~~ a question based on information stored on ~~a~~ <u>the</u> computer-readable medium comprising ~~code that~~:

computer program code for parsing ~~a~~ <u>the</u> question <u>into a series of syntactic categories</u>;

computer program code for generating ~~generates~~ an analyzed question

comprising the syntactic categories of the parsed question ~~including a first identification~~

~~of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question~~;

computer program code for identifying ~~at least~~ one or more predetermined

question pattern~~s~~ within the analyzed question ~~including a second identification of a~~

~~syntactic category matching the first identification of a syntactic category~~;

computer program code for transforming ~~transforms~~ the one or more identified

question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, ~~said code that~~

~~transforms~~ including computer program code that matches each of the identified

question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one

or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified

statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined

transformations are affirmative statement patterns corresponding to said one or more

matched question patterns;

computer program code for generating ~~generates~~ partially unspecified queries

corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and

computer program code for determining ~~obtains~~ answers by matching the

partially unspecified queries to stored information.

46.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium ~~computer program~~

~~product~~ of Claim 45, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one

syntactic or morphological restriction.